

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Wenatchee, Washington

Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Craig Busack, NMFS (via phone)
Matt Cooper, USFWS
Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)
Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation
Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD (alt)
Todd Pearsons, GPUD
Mike Tonseth, WDFW
Kirk Truscott, CCT

Other Participants

Mark Ahrens, USFWS (via phone)
Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator
Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Decisions

- A. Approved the February meeting summary as amended.
- B. Approved the 2015-2016 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Implementation Plan.
- C. Endorsed the Priest Rapids Hatchery otolith reading and alternative mating strategy as proposed by GPUD.
- D. Agreed to begin volitional release of Nason spring Chinook and Carlton summer Chinook on 4/13. Nason spring Chinook will be forced out on 5/1 and Carlton summer Chinook will be forced out on 5/15.

Actions

1. GPUD will circulate a report on White River spring Chinook transfer. (done)
2. USFWS will circulate the pathology report on the White River fish. (in progress)
3. YN will circulate the summary data from the parr tracked from the Nason Creek rotary trap to the Little Wenatchee River. (carried over from previous meeting summary)
4. WDFW will circulate a third draft broodstock collection protocol document; HSC members will provide comments on the draft by 3/26; WDFW will circulate a revised draft on 3/27. (done)
5. GPUD will check with its PRCC representative to see if the PRCC wants to review the draft broodstock collection protocols. (done)
6. WDFW will amend footnote 3 of Table 10 in the draft broodstock collection protocol to indicate that there is an unresolved difference in interpretation of the rearing and release strategy for the Nason Creek safety net component. (done)
7. YN will re-circulate the draft Wenatchee Spring Chinook Management Plan. (add to Box site?)
8. Ross Strategic will circulate the final 2015-2016 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Implementation Plan and post the file to Boxnet. (done)
9. GPUD will consider additional collection strategies for Priest Rapids Hatchery with associated benefits and impediments. (done...)

10. Ross Strategic will circulate the final document with size and volitional release targets for Carlton and Nason. (done)
11. WDFW will contact state invasive species staff to determine the timeline for development of a New Zealand Mud Snail protocol (carried over from previous meeting summary).
12. CCT will circulate its Chief Joseph hatchery program workshop report with the HSC (carried over from previous meeting summary).
 13. WDFW was to provide data on White River fecundity and the survival of natural origin White River adults between Tumwater Dam and the spawning grounds and egg retention. (in progress)
- 14.

I. White River Spring Chinook

- A. **Fish Transfer** – All White River spring Chinook have now been transferred from LWSNFH to the temporary acclimation sites and Lake Wenatchee net pens. Final fish pathology results were not available at meeting time but mortality was stable and the fish appeared to be in good condition post-culling at the hatchery.
- B. **Next Steps**
 - GPUD will circulate a report on White River spring Chinook transfer.
 - USFWS will circulate the pathology report on the White River fish.

II. Broodstock Collection Protocols

- A. **Review of Draft Protocols** – WDFW is preparing a third draft of the broodstock collection protocols for review and will circulate the draft with the PRCC HSC and HCP-HC.
 - GPUD commented on footnote 4 in Table 10 of the draft document:

“Due to the lack of returning hatchery fish from the Nason program (first age-4 returns are expected in 2017), Chiwawa hatchery fish will be collected to satisfy the Nason Cr. safety net program and released from Chiwawa Ponds.”

GPUD noted that the permit language is unclear as to whether hatchery returns from the Chiwawa program can be used as part of the marked Nason Creek safety net program. GPUD’s understanding was that the Nason Creek program would be composited to allow GPUD to fulfill mitigation requirements for Nason Creek, and the safety net program would reflect the composited conservation program. If the Nason Creek population is prioritized for natural origin fish and hatchery origin fish are not composited, GPUD management staff will question why the recently constructed Nason Creek facility is only operating at partial capacity while also entering into a new agreement with CPUD for acclimating and releasing Chiwawa fish on behalf of the Nason Creek Program.

- CCT noted that once the NOR component is composited, the resulting releases will contain a Chiwawa hatchery origin component, regardless.

- WDFW noted that the number and type of fish to be collected will not change; the issue is the rearing and release strategy for those fish.
- NMFS agreed that the permit language is unclear and the effects analysis may not have considered compositing of the Nason Creek safety net component.
- YN noted that the draft Wenatchee Spring Chinook Management Plan mentions the startup of the Nason Creek conservation and safety net programs and it contemplated using Chiwawa hatchery fish for the Nason Program; this document was approved by all HSC members except CCT (CCT did not disapprove the document; CCT endorsement of this document requires natural resource committee and tribal council approval).
- CCT noted that the Wenatchee Spring Chinook Management Plan is a living document and revisions are likely needed to address the amended biop and associated broodstock collection strategy.

B. Next Steps

- WDFW will circulate a third draft of the broodstock collection protocols; HSC members will provide comments on the third draft by 3/26; WDFW will circulate a revised draft on 3/27.
- GPUD will check with its PRCC representative to see if the PRCC wants to review the draft broodstock collection protocols.
- WDFW will amend footnote 3 of Table 10 in the draft broodstock collection protocols to indicate that there is an unresolved difference in interpretation of the rearing and release strategy for the Nason Creek safety net component.
- YN will re-circulate the draft Wenatchee Spring Chinook Management Plan.

III. Permit Updates

A. Spring Chinook HGMP Re-initiation – NMFS will incorporate the recently issued PRCC-HSC/HCP-HC letter into the HGMP re-initiation process.

B. Methow Spring Chinook – NMFS will likely re-start work on this soon, with several key issues to work through. NMFS had previously suggested that USFWS and the PUDs discuss sharing of monitoring responsibilities. Another issue is adult management; the original plan was a co-mingled, sliding scale PHOS approach but last fall the PUDs asked to consider a PNI approach. NMFS gave approval to consider the PNI approach but the PUD-developed plan did not include Winthrop Hatchery production. The third issue is that CPUD has developed a sharing plan to rear fish at Methow Hatchery but the plan has not been agreed upon. NMFS would like to resolve this issue prior to consultation.

- GPUD commented that it was unaware that NMFS was expecting USFWS and the PUDs to meet to discuss sharing monitoring responsibilities.

IV. Updates and Meeting Summary Review

A. February Meeting Summary – The HSC approved the February meeting summary as amended.

V. White River Productivity

A. Productivity Estimate by Life-Stage – GPUD updated its presentation on White River spring Chinook productivity (from the February HSC meeting) using additional/supplementary data as suggested by HSC members. The findings using the updated data are consistent with the preliminary findings and indicate that White River productivity is so low that it is difficult to develop a scenario that achieves sustainability. If sustainability is not achievable, a logical next question is whether the management approach should be reconsidered. If the intent of a management approach is to bridge a population as it builds toward sustainability, that approach might not be warranted if sustainability is not feasible. GPUD also noted that in the case of White River - where habitat is relatively intact - there appears to be little opportunity for in-basin productivity improvements. The social value of a White River spring Chinook population is also a factor for consideration.

- CCT commented that the productivity analysis helps frame the potential questions required to determine if a White River program should be initiated in 2026 and helps identify the most significant barriers to productivity.
- YN suggested contacting WDFW's Jeremy Cram to see if his life cycle model can complement the productivity analysis.
- WDFW was to provide data on White River fecundity and the survival of natural origin White River adults between Tumwater Dam and the spawning grounds and egg retention.

VI. Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E

A. Draft M&E 2015-2016 Implementation Plan – HSC members voted to approve the 2015-2016 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Plan.

B. Next Steps

- Ross Strategic will circulate the final 2015-2016 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Implementation Plan and post the file to Boxnet.

VII. Priest Rapids Hatchery Otolith Reading and Alternative Mating Strategy

A. Proposed 2015 Activities – GPUD updated the proposed 2015 activities with additional data from WDFW.

- CCT commented that the agreement to collect NORs at the OLAFT was based on the lack of alternative collection strategies for natural origin fish. Because of strong run sizes this has not been an issue to-date but when overall survival numbers enter a down cycle, extracting the same number of fish from the OLAFT could have a greater impact on Upper Columbia MSAs. CCT suggested developing a list of other collection strategies, with associated advantages and impediments, as a necessary first step.
- GPUD noted that it has worked to increase natural origin fish in the broodstock (pNOB) by excluding known hatchery fish and younger aged males at the volunteer trap, increasing funding and effort for the angler broodstock collection program,

and evaluating and implementing real-time otolith reading. It has also developed and evaluated an alternative means to increase pNOB by using natural origin males to spawn with 4 females and to calculate pNOB using a gene flow method. GPUD has worked within the boundaries of policy decisions to improve pNOB. Strategies such as using all-wild fish at the volunteer trap would require 100% non-lethal marking or tagging, which would have to be addressed in a forum outside of the HSC. [Note: GPUD has also not received a draft report on the HSC approved approach to evaluate broodstock collection at the OLAFT and one of the functions of the report was to evaluate the effects on fall Chinook that would migrate above Wells Dam.]

- YN emphasized that for the tribe, all marking issues must be addressed within the US v Oregon Committee.
- WDFW noted that the HSC has the ability to determine whether a marking strategy is necessary to implement a program; whether the marking strategy is deployed will depend on agreement in US v Oregon Committee.
- GPUD noted that the hatchery representative for GPUD could not reverse a policy position on marking by GPUD.

B. Voting – HSC members voted to endorse the Priest Rapids Hatchery otolith reading and alternative mating strategy as proposed by GPUD.

C. Next Steps

- GPUD will consider additional collection strategies for Priest Rapids Hatchery with associated benefits and impediments.

VIII. Size Target and Volitional Release

A. Draft Size and Volitional Release Targets for Carlton and Nason – For spring Chinook, GPUD recommends following a growth approach similar to 2014 until 2/15, at which point the fish would be grown as quickly as possible for compensatory growth and to achieve sufficient size to avoid predation.

- CCT noted that Rocky Reach bypass operations begin on 4/1. The Rock Island spill usually is synchronized with Leavenworth releases (scheduled for 4/17). If a large number of fish are released early from Carlton and Nason, there is potential for a large gap between spring and summer spill operations.

B. Decision on Release Timing – HSC member agreed to begin volitional release of Nason spring Chinook and Carlton summer Chinook on 4/13. Nason spring Chinook will be forced out on 5/1 and Carlton summer Chinook will be forced out on 5/15.

C. Next Steps

- Ross Strategic will circulate the final document with size and volitional release targets for Carlton and Nason.

IX. Wrap Up and Next Steps

A. Next Meeting: Thursday, April 16, 2015

B. Potential April Meeting Agenda Items

- Broodstock collection protocols
- White River 2026 planning
- White River productivity

Meeting Materials

The following documents were provided to HSC members in advance of this meeting:

- March meeting agenda
- White River decision tree
- Draft February meeting summary
- List of documents in the Boxnet site, by folder
- Summary of a recently-released ISAB report “Density Dependence and its Implications for Fish Management and Restoration in the Columbia River Basin”
- Draft 2015 broodstock collection protocols
- PRH M&E 2015-2016 implementation plan